

## [Mother Hoover]

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FOLKSTUFF - RANGE LORE

Range-lore

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San Angelo, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

Mother Hoover, as Mrs. Laura Hoover is affectionately known to her friends, is one of Crockett County's most interesting and lovable pioneers. She helped to build, and lived in, the first house in Crockett County. Her present beautiful and hospitable home is known far and wide as a haven of welcome, interest, and charm.

"We Hoovers are really old timers here," smilingly related Mrs. Laura Hoover of Ozona, Texas, "and we still love our west Texas even more now than in the so-called good old days, when we watched the construction of our one-room mud house with one eye and looked for Indians with the other.

"My husband, two children and I left Kimble County when there were few roads even there and none in the parts. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 We put our scant supplies and meager house hold goods in a covered wagon and started out on what was then a long and perilous journey.

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"Mr. Hoover and one cowboy drove 200 head of cattle and mapped out a road for me most of the way. When we started he thought I could not manage the two babies, the team and my rifle, so he hired a boy as teamster. I do believe that was the greenest boy I ever saw. He worried me all day long and when we camped that first night and he got up next morning putting the horses collars on back-wards I told my husband to send him back home before we got further out on the road and we had him on our hands for all time. I could manage the team, the babies and everything else better then I could him. As I said, there were no roads after we got on out a ways and Mr. Hoover led on ahead and I followed, holding my baby on my lap, driving the team and snatching at Arthur every few minutes, as we bounced and jostled over hills and valleys.

"We stretched a cowhide under the wagon as a cradle for the tired calves when they would give out. If one fell out, it was small bother to stop and restore him to his restful abode.

"Somehow we escaped the Indian attacks of which we were in constant dread and after camping along Devils River for three months looking for a suitable place to locate, we finally decided upon a place here in Crockett County. We built 3 our house under a big bluff because we wanted the protection from the weather and also the Indians. Across this bluff just seven miles was water well known as Howard's well but we could not cross that way and were forced to go entirely around, a distance of some twenty-five miles to obtain our drinking water.

"No mansion was ever constructed with greater fondness of pride or its occupancy enjoyed more fully, than was that first shelter from the black winds and blinding dust storms of the wild and woolly west. We made our foundation of cedar pickets and covered that with a mixture of mud and grass. The one big room had one window and one door.

"Many times I have known periods of seven to ten months to elapse without my seeing a women of any kind but I did not have to look around to find something to while away the time; no lonely hours for me. My duties with the household, the babies and helping my

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husband with the round-ups and branding occupied my every moment much more fully than the bridge hours of today.

"We hauled our supplies from Fort Stockton and occasionally when they were exhausted there we would have to go on to Fort Davis.

"We were 80 miles from a doctor and knew better than to get sick. I made tea from greasewood plant and it served for practically all ailments. Risings of any sign of blood poisoning 4 were treated with patalla poultices.

"On one occasion when my husband was away, (which he was very often) I was at work in the back of the house, when I looked up and saw a big rattler stretched across my door. He was sunning himself contentedly and made no attempt to get away as I moved toward my rifle. I killed him and watched for his mate to show up for several days but I never saw another snake that large.

"I was helping my husband with the rounding-up and branding once and we were out on the range together looking for a stray herd. All at once we rode right up on a very recently deserted camp fire. Shelled corn was scattered all about the camp and the remains of a dead calf lay near by. It had been killed and the ribs removed and roasted. A short distance away lay a dead horse with a square of skin cut from his hip. We had heard that the Ketchum and Upshaw outlaws were expected through as they had robbed a train in another part of the country and were making their get-a-way through Crockett County. We were convinced that this was their camp and that the pack horse had been killed and the brand cut away. Later it was reported that they had buried the money there also and did not longer need the pack horse. As we looked about I says, 'Now Pap, they are bound to have friends somewhere in these parts, else this corn would not be here.' This was long before there was an Ozona but many years later in a Masonic Lodge in Ozona 5 a friend told my husband that my remark was over heard at that time and he repeated to him the exact words I had said. This convinced Pap and me that some one was there in hiding as

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we explored the camp that day. They could have been either looking for or guarding the money, we never knew.

"I have been a widow now for several years but still try to have the home fires burning when the children or my many good friends visit my home." Range-lore

Elizabeth Doyle

San Angelo, Texas

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mrs. Laura Hoover, Ozona, Texas, interviewed November 16, 1937.